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Introduced by Senator Price

July 14, 2009

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Senate Resolution No. 24—Relative to health care coverage for children.

1 WHEREAS, Nearly nine million children in America are  
2 uninsured and of these uninsured children, nearly 1.3 million of  
3 them reside in California; and

4 WHEREAS, Almost six million uninsured children in the United  
5 States are eligible for health coverage under the federal Medicaid  
6 program or the federal State Children’s Health Insurance Program  
7 (SCHIP), but are not enrolled, often due to excessive enrollment  
8 barriers; and

9 WHEREAS, The United States is the wealthiest nation in the  
10 world, but the status of children’s health in our country, as  
11 measured by selected indicators, is among the worst in the  
12 industrialized world; and

13 WHEREAS, Every year, roughly 750,000 pregnant women in  
14 the United States are uninsured and lack timely access to essential  
15 health services and approximately 28,000 children die each year  
16 before their first birthday, ranking the United States 25th among  
17 30 industrialized countries in infant mortality; and

18 WHEREAS, Almost one out of every four children who are two  
19 years of age is not fully immunized; and

20 WHEREAS, One in 12 babies born in the United States has a  
21 low birth weight; and

22 WHEREAS, Health insurance premiums and health care costs  
23 have risen four times faster than wages at the same time that fewer  
24 employers are providing coverage for employees; and

1 WHEREAS, Health care costs for working families continue to  
2 rise, making it difficult for the families to afford insurance or access  
3 to quality care; and

4 WHEREAS, A 2008 report by the California HealthCare  
5 Foundation cites research from the Employee Benefit Research  
6 Institute indicating that the percentage of uninsured Californians  
7 under 65 years of age has continued to rise over the last two  
8 decades as employer-sponsored health insurance has declined.  
9 Between 1987 and 2007, employer-sponsored health care coverage  
10 declined almost 8 percent, and although Medi-Cal and individually  
11 purchased coverage partially offset that decline, more than 6.6  
12 million Californians remained uninsured; and

13 WHEREAS, In California, an estimated \$212 billion was spent  
14 on health care in 2008, which is sufficient to provide every resident  
15 of the state with excellent health care, ensure fair reimbursement  
16 to providers, and guarantee a high quality of care for all; and

17 WHEREAS, Children are particularly vulnerable in the current  
18 economic downturn and at a time of massive federal and state  
19 budget deficits; and

20 WHEREAS, The Children's Defense Fund is leading a national  
21 campaign to guarantee comprehensive health coverage for all  
22 children and pregnant women, having convened hundreds of groups  
23 and secured endorsements from almost 1,300 organizations  
24 representing more than 60 million people throughout the United  
25 States; and

26 WHEREAS, Uninsured children are less likely to receive needed  
27 medical care and attention than adults; and

28 WHEREAS, Extending coverage to children is cost effective  
29 because children with coverage are more likely to receive  
30 immunizations and receive services at the primary care level,  
31 avoiding costly and unnecessary emergency room care; and

32 WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States is currently  
33 debating health care legislation that would shift our nation's system  
34 of health care toward a comprehensive and universal structure and  
35 the President of the United States has urged Congress to pass this  
36 legislation before the congressional recess begins on August 8,  
37 2009; and

38 WHEREAS, Any health care reform legislation should establish  
39 a national eligibility level to cover all children and ensure that  
40 coverage is affordable, guarantee a national benefit package that

1 covers all medically necessary health, mental health, and dental  
2 services, ensure that children are enrolled in the national benefit  
3 package and stay enrolled by eliminating known barriers to  
4 enrollment and instituting automatic enrollment of eligible children,  
5 and include reasonable reimbursement rates to ensure that children  
6 with health coverage actually receive medical services when and  
7 where they are needed; and

8 WHEREAS, It is imperative for our nation's health and economy  
9 that every child and pregnant woman have access to affordable  
10 health and mental health coverage and services; now, therefore,  
11 be it

12 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That the Senate  
13 urges the Congress of the United States to promptly pass, and  
14 President Obama to sign, bipartisan health care legislation that  
15 includes health care coverage for all children; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
17 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
18 States, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to the Speaker of the  
19 House of Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative  
20 from California in the Congress of the United States.